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PUNCH



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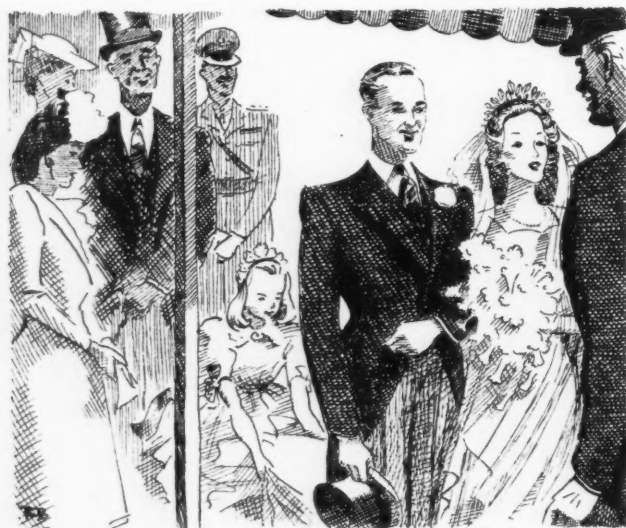
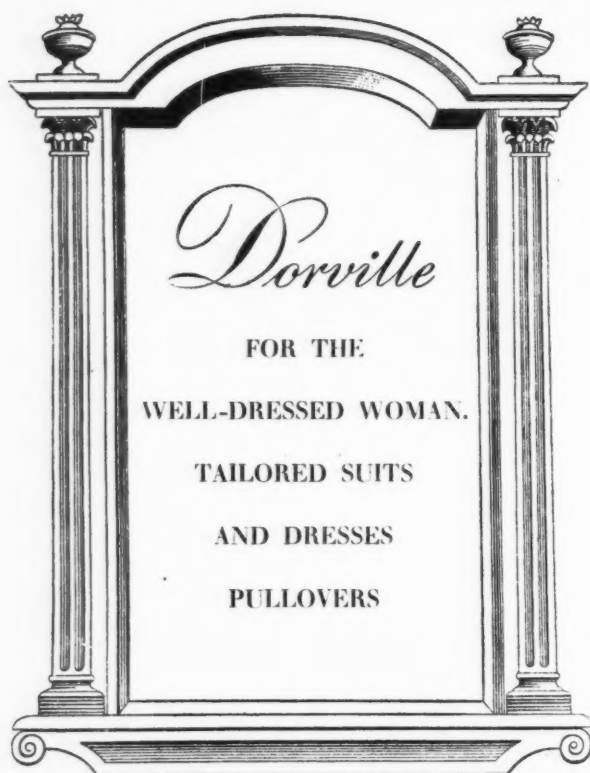
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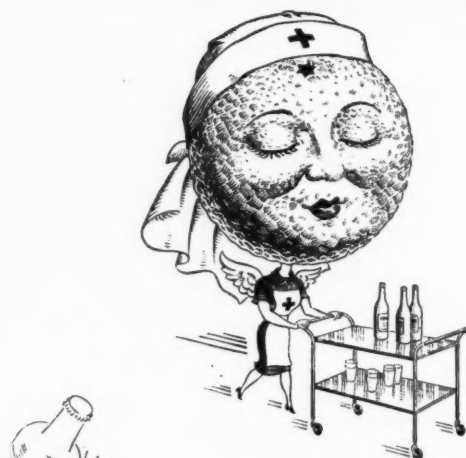
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G. 105

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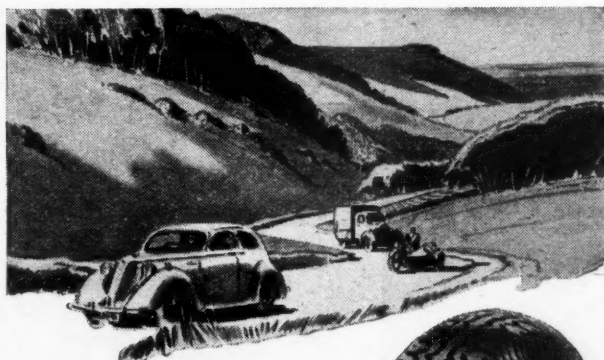
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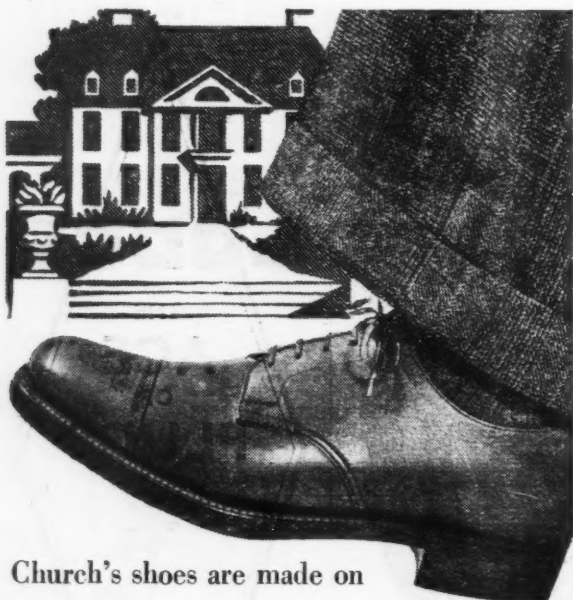
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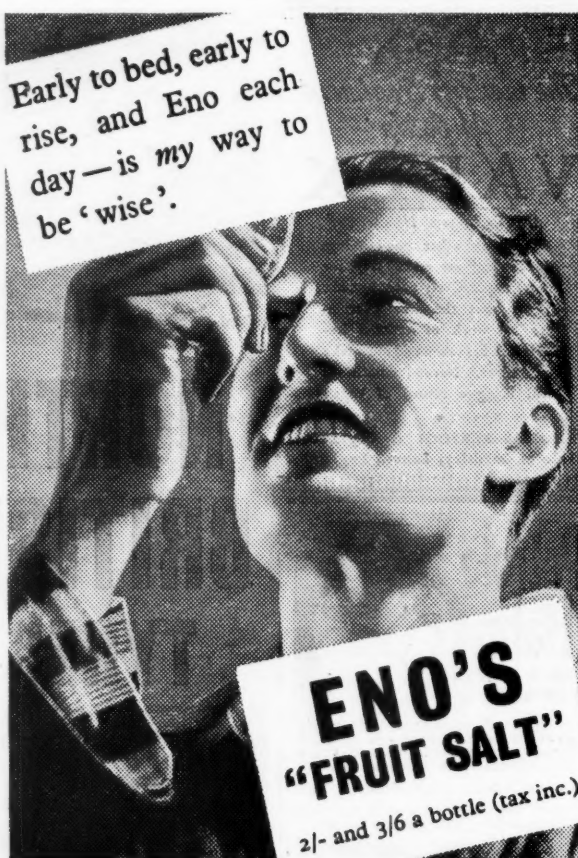
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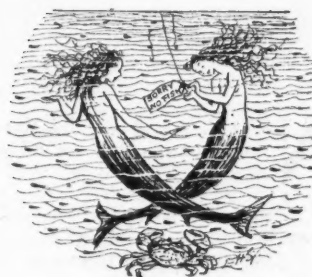




PUNCH

OR

THE LONDON CHARIVARI



Vol. CCXI No. 5507

July 17 1946

Charivaria

"No lecturer likes to see members of his audience look at their watches while he is speaking," states an educationist. Still less does he like it when they hold them up to their ears to see if they're going.

We understand that Mr. C. B. Cochran's production *Big Ben* is to retain its present title despite recent Ministerial changes and will not be renamed *Stupendous Strachey*.



An organized gang of children in an American town stole a car, kidnapped a boy and exploded a hand-grenade in the street. Students of juvenile delinquency put the blame on the baneful influence of the news-reels.

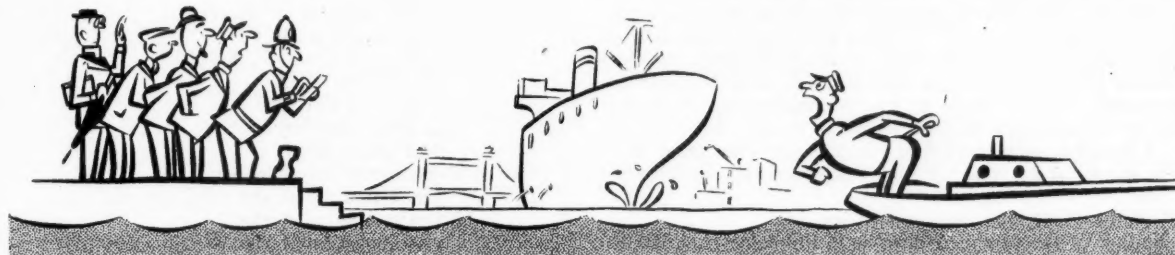
"How can I make my nine-months-old baby boy put on weight?" asks an anxious father. He should carry him a few miles.

Opportunist

"An officer who went to investigate formed the opinion that he was unfit for duty, and relieved him of his watch."

"The Evening News."

The glass trade views with grave concern a rumoured further reduction in the gravity of beer as it is felt that this will create a huge demand for tankards with handles the other way up.



An Ipswich tradesman says he lay in bed the other night and counted three hundred and sixty-two flashes of lightning in an hour. We still concentrate on sheep.

A church organist asks us whether members of his profession are entitled to an extra bread ration as manual workers.

To be a successful beggar the professional tramp, we are told, has to keep abreast of the times. Any day now he may knock at your door and say: "Can you spare a unit, lady?"

"Pedigree Scotch Terriers For Sale. Dog and Bitch Puppies, by son of Ch. Malgen Juggernaut; dam well bred."

Advt. in "Cumberland Herald."

Oh, jolly good show!

Playing the bagpipes is recommended as a cure for asthma. And playing the ukulele is said to afford temporary relief from chronic guitar.

"Also small Springer Spaniel (bitch), 12 mths., house trained and not gin shy."—*Advt. in Local paper.*

Suit naval officer.

A Thames-side bargee is alleged to have sworn at a policeman for twenty minutes. Listeners standing near say the peroration was particularly good.

Wheat

NEVER, I suppose, did Man embark on so fantastic and complicated an adventure as the eating of bread. Unfitted by nature to browse in comfort like a sheep, to climb like a mouse, or to peck like a bird, he nevertheless conceived the audacious idea of getting a lot of wild grass, taming it, throwing away everything but the seeds, gathering them with infinite labour, throwing away most of the bits, messing up the rest with water into a kind of awful sponge, and cooking the whole affair in an oven, after aerating it with yeast.

One may well ask why. Here was the land replete with nourishing animals, the water teeming with fishes, the trees heavy with fruit. Large and succulent roots could be torn from the ground. There was sugar to be chewed from branches, and honey provided by the bees. Vitamins peered with shining eyes through the forest trees, and calories lurked or frisked by mountain, vale and stream. What need of all this toil? It is difficult not to be impatient with Man for doing anything so silly as turning twitch into food.

How many stalks of this cultivated weed, may I ask, are used to make a single portion of a rationed roll? Anthropology is silent. Political economy is baffled. Gastronomy veils her averted head.

No history tells us who first tied an aurochs to a piece of sharpened wood, and set it to tear up the harmless ground, and then tied another aurochs to a wooden sledge to carry home the harvest of weeds, and then tied a third aurochs to a circular stone to grind up the debris into flour. Wheat was cultivated for bread in China five thousand years ago, it has been found in the tombs of the Pharaohs, though what is left is far too stale to use, and let it be remembered that it is chiefly in the sub-tropical regions of the earth that this ridiculous process has been going on and on. The South Sea Islander, when not evicted by atom bombs, prefers his plantain, the Eskimo remains faithful to his whale. It is only so-called civilization that compels millions of men using thousands of acres of soil to forsake leisure and happiness and triturate seed.

When my novel about Primitive Man is published, there will be (apart from the love interest) three main characters. They will be Gum, a man of the torrid zone, Hug, a hunter of the Far North, and Mar a sub-tropical man.

"What hunch hast thou, O Mar," said Gum lazily, "in tending all these wild grasses with so much care?" And, so saying, he plucked a wild bread-fruit and drove his sharp fangs deep into its fleshy pulp.

"The genus *Triticum*," replied Mar with a quiet smile, as he bent over his garden, "is distinguished by a spike with many-flowered spikelets without stalks, and seated one on each notch of the rachis, and two glumes, of which the lower is either awned or awnless. Of this herb, in the course of a few million years, I propose to manufacture wheat. I foresee a time, O Gum, when my descendants, fed on the cultivated product of these grasses, will fly through the air faster than sound and be able to destroy mountains and exterminate whole communities of men. But let me see what Hug has to say to it all."

"I would rather snare fishes in the sea, and catch the wild beasts in my pits, O Mar, than break my back over botany."

"Well said, O Hug," answered Gum.

Neither of the two men could help reflecting that Mar's

psychology was perverted, his whole nature warped by ambitious designs, which might never be fulfilled.

These sentences come from a very early chapter in the book, and give you some idea of its scope and the beauty of its style. None of the characters will suffer from any lack of acquaintance with encyclopædias, or any ignorance of psychiatry, and Hug and Gum will run away with Mar's daughters and wives.

Mar himself, at the end, having achieved the summit of his futile ambitions and invented the plough, will find himself lonely and deserted, having sacrificed all that really makes life worth living and been smitten with severe indigestion after eating the earliest loaf of bread.

"Tears streamed from his eyes as he bent again over his furrow. Not even the pageant of history as he beheld it in dreams, nor the anticipation of future film-rights could console him. Of what value were those awns which he had so assiduously cultivated? Gum and Hug were happy, while before him lay nothing but a prospect of infinite glumes."

* * * * *

There seems to be little more to be said about wheat, except that in the eighth century the monks of the Abbey of Bury St. Edmunds ate barley bread because the income of the abbey would not admit of their using wheaten bread regularly, and that the principal diseases of wheat are bunt, mildew and rust.

The wheat-ear, on the other hand, is a bird of the Chat genus and a summer visitor to the British islands. The bird leaps in an unpredictable way through the air, and the song of the male is very pleasing. It is also known as the fallow-finch, the white-tail and the stone-chacker and may be eaten (as a single course) on toast.

* * * * *

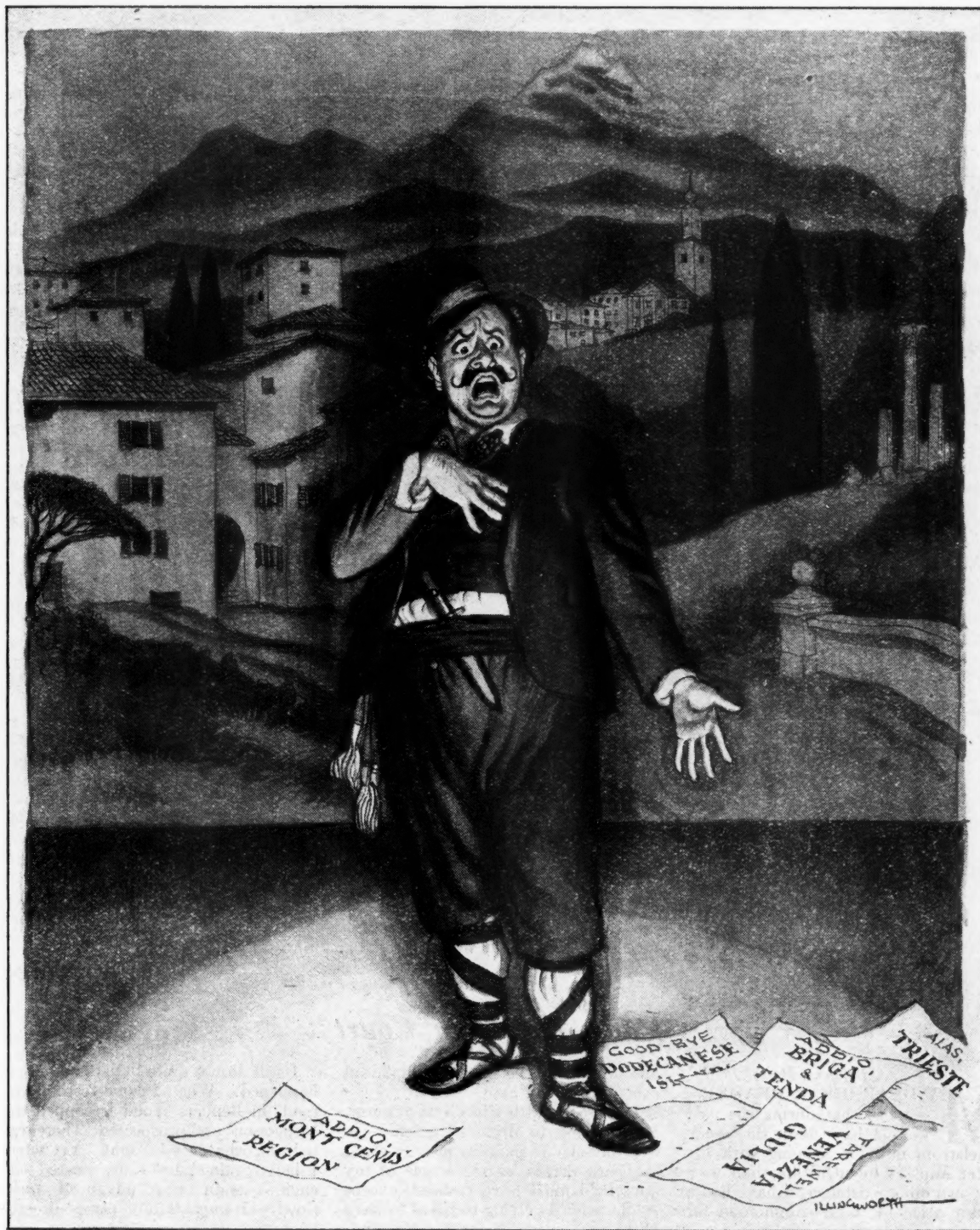
The object of this short essay has been to persuade you to look on bread calmly and impartially, realizing that it may be not a blessing but a curse; and at the same time to remember Lord Tennyson's noble and passionate lines, which begin:—

"Flour in the crannied wall
I pluck you out of the crannies."

EVOE.

Basic Dirge

SINCE bread is on the ration
My love is cold and distant,
I find her former passion
Is almost non-existent.
I asked her why;
She answered "Shucks,
You're not a BUY,
You're not a BUX."
A BUY or BUX
Has all the fun,
A BUX can buy
A girl a bun.
She tells me that I irk her,
She's finding, if she can,
A heavy manual worker,
Not just a basic man.



SIGNOR FURIOSO

Ah, Giulia! Ah, Dodecanese!
Was it in vain I swore
They should not make me lose the Peace
Because I lost the War?



"Yes, we're going all out to attract foreign visitors this year."

Lady Addle in Court

Bengers, Herts, 1946

MY DEAR, DEAR READERS,
—I feel that during the past week I have been through a maelstrom more in keeping with my sister Mipsie's eventful life than with my own quiet existence. I have had a motor accident, been summonsed for dangerous driving, appeared in court and been delivered, as though by a miracle, from penalty or even harsh judgment. Yet when I look back on it I am ashamed ever to have harboured doubts or anxieties. I should have realized that Providence has always guarded every Coot with special care,

and would not be likely to make an exception in my case.

It all seems rather like a dream now. My learning to drive so quickly—in four days I was spinning merrily along the park drives, as the whole of my household must have realized, except Addle, who is getting too deaf to have heard me changing gear. My first, wholly successful excursion into the great outside world—the only vehicles I met very considerably got off the road for me, and I contrived to back most neatly out of a blackberry bush that had somehow got in my way. Then, on my second journey—the accident.

I still do not quite understand what happened. When I came to the cross roads in Bengers Wood I stopped the car, got out and prospected. There was nothing whatever in sight. Yet when I had regained my seat, started the engine again and advanced *quite* slowly—I immediately came directly in contact with a grocer's van.

As bad luck would have it it wasn't Mead Brothers, our own dear grocers, who have handed the bag for fifty years and would have considered the collision an honour; nor yet Cranberry, whom I have occasionally patronized when I wanted gifts for raffles, so I am on

At the Pictures

WALT DOES MORE THAN GROUCHO CAN

In a film by the MARX BROTHERS one counts on getting a stream of good wisecracks from GROUCHO, at least one lunatic dialogue between GROUCHO and CHICO, and one or more first-rate pieces of sustained high-speed fooling from all three brothers together. This is not to mention CHICO on the piano and HARPO on the harp, because one gets those whether one counts on them or not. *A Night in Casablanca* falls below the old firm's highest level because, though the combined fooling is there all right and in one instance pre-eminently succeeds, much of GROUCHO's material is not up to standard and one waits in vain for an interchange with CHICO of the calibre of those in, say, *Animal Crackers* and *A Day at the Races*.

The smooth routine of the smart Hotel Casablanca, already a little disturbed by the mysterious deaths of three managers, is further threatened when Kornblow, a man with a black moustache and a curious crouching walk, arrives to replace the latest victim. HARPO is already installed there as a valet, while CHICO does a little crooked business in charge of the Yellow Camel Company. Add a secret hoard of loot and a bunch of Nazis determined to get away with it, and it becomes clear that there is going to be serious trouble in this hotel. There is. The big moment is when the three brothers complicate the getaway of the Nazis by continually (and, in a sense, *in camera*) unpacking the belongings of Count Pfefferman (Head Nazi) as fast as he packs them up. This is Marxian comedy at its best, and it is a pity the film does not end somewhere about here, instead of tailing off into a rather tedious piece of knockabout on an aerodrome.

Half the trouble is that one goes to a MARX BROTHERS film expecting too much. It may be that one or two people, after reading this, may go expecting too little, and come out in consequence convinced that this is the best ever and that the present writer is a shambling old curmudgeon. If so, good. The reader's happiness is all that matters.

Mr. WALT DISNEY has assembled ten musical episodes in *Make Mine Music*. Two of them, "The Whale Who Wanted to Sing at the Met," and "Peter and the Wolf," are in the traditional Disney animal-story vein and each will have its champions. The

neither here nor there. "Casey at the Bat," in old-fashioned waltz-time, has entertaining moments, particularly perhaps if you don't know the rules of baseball, and "All the Cats Join In" is good jitterbug, to BENNY GOODMAN's band.

People talk disparagingly of DISNEY's tone-poems; but not me. I like to see long-legged white birds (cranes?) stalking about in dim blue pools or wheeling about the tops of fantastic trees in the moonlight, such sights being insufficiently common in and around London to have become boring; and I particularly enjoy watching streams of paint pouring and commingling down the screen, and wondering whether they will take shape presently as a purple landscape or a green elephant, though not, I always pray, as a cluster of fat babies. Whether the scenes presented successfully interpret the music I am not equipped to say.



J.H. DOWD

[I See a Dark Stranger

SUCH WOMEN ARE DANGEROUS.

David Baynes TREVOR HOWARD
Bridie Quilty DEBORAH KERR

fact that I personally enjoyed "Peter and the Wolf," which is about Peter and, in short, a wolf (story from the Russian with music by PROKOFIEFF) and found the whale tiresome is



J.H. D.

[Make Mine Music

TRI-UVULAR CETACEAN

Bridie Quilty, inspired by her father's bogus accounts of his exploits during the Troubles, goes up to Dublin on her twenty-first birthday, keen to shoot a few Englishmen. But the year is 1944, a close season for Englishmen in Ireland, so she joins a German spy organization as the next best thing. She gets about, to a pub in England, to the Isle of Man, back to the Ulster border, harassed at every turn by Germans, living or dead, by the British authorities who want her and by *David Baynes*, a British officer on sick-leave, who wants her even more. Her adventures are told in *I See a Dark Stranger* (Director: FRANK LAUNDER).

This is a good film, of the comedy-thriller type, with more emphasis on the amusement than the thrills—witness the fact that when viciousness rears its ugly head (*Bridie* is hit in the face by a Nazi) the incident seems out of key. Not so the final fight between *David* and the gang, where there are always enough bodies (not corpses) toppling backwards into a bathful of water to keep pity and terror at bay.

But if the film never quite compels belief, it is full of ingenious situations, steers well clear of the over-dramatic, has plenty of laughs and is admirably acted down to the smallest parts.

DEBORAH KERR makes an attractive *Bridie* and TREVOR HOWARD a manly and pleasant *David*. H. F. E.

Fungus



Oh, no.



Committee—



meetings—



can—



never—



be—



really—



dull—



not so long as—



there's an attendance book—



to come round—



and set us all off once again—



arguing—



about the merits—



of our respective—



fountain pens.



"We ain't got no nice 'ot crisp freshly-baked rolls,
not unless you ask for 'em, sir."

A Blimp Remains . . .

AND still he rides, aloof but clear,
The London skies above,
A blimp whom there is none to fear
Or, nowadays, to love.
One thought his kind had vanished quite
But somehow there he is all right.

Sole relic of a bygone day
He leads the thoughtful mind
To wonder in a casual way
How he got left behind.
There must have been, low be it said,
Some error at the fountain head.

And when at last the fateful word
Doomed all the blimps to go
(Who 'twas among the great that erred
'Tis not for us to know)
This one survivor somehow missed
Inclusion in the lethal list.

Was there an underling so brave
As to point out the fact?
That would indeed have been a grave
And dangerous want of tact.
I tried that once, but can't forget
The chill reception that I met.

And still in his sequestered lair
Some soft official sleeps

Unweeting that a blimp's up there
Apparently for keeps.
One day the light will on him break;
Then there'll be fun, or I mistake.

I hear a cry Gor-lumme, or
High words to that effect.
An edict flashes sharply for
Prompt action and direct.
The blimp will vanish from the skies.
The soft official close his eyes.

* * * * *

P.S.—An idle dream, no more,
Hints that it might be there
As portent of the weather, or
Some similar affair.
Readers, howe'er it seems to you,
Forgive me if I murmur Pooh.

DUM-DUM.

B. Smith Bandies a Lance with H. J.

MY colleague and convive, Harmony Jenkins, has made from time to time various public references to me which I should like, in my pawky way, to challenge. Far be it from me to cast a cloud over our relationship, but even mice and men must be allowed to go agley from time to time, and Harmony, dear fellow that he is, is not unapt to sacrifice the claims of common decency to those of literature. Well do I remember his dedicating one of his logarithm tables to me in language which would have been libellous were it possible to explain anagrams to a jury. To clear myself, therefore, and to show that even doves have teeth, I make a fleeting and embarrassed appearance *coram publico*.

I am a qualified scientist and not, as H. J. has hinted, a somewhat elderly pupil, living on crumbs from my master's bench. For two sessions I was an Inspector of Technical Institutes, and there are few branches of Natural Philosophy which I have not heard expounded in my time. I have also carefully perused the scientific articles in the *Encyclopædia Britannica* (Vowels) and made my own index, choosing an early edition as a good bibliophile should. Azote, Phlogiston, Animal Magnetism—what happy memories they bring to mind of hours spent in the Pullman between Burslem and Solihull—a Pullman because there was a free table and the route so that no fair prospect should distract me from my toil. As for "Paper qualifications," I have purchased the degree of Doc. Sci. from the All-in University, Brooklyn, receiving also that of B. Lit. Hum.; the sales being on, two were provided for the price of one.

I do not wish by any means to infer that I have learnt nothing from my long association with Mr. Jenkins. Many is the time when he has given me the initial impetus in some piece of research. "Say an atomic weight," I have often gaily called out to him, and have then proceeded to prepare in pure form the appropriate element. Or again, having set up an apparatus, I may ask him to pass something through it, and my problem is to determine what has passed through. Sometimes, for example, it has been hydrogen, sometimes an electric current. On one occasion it was a number of bacilli, though these did not,



"I understand the really interesting thing about these machines is that they print the ticket AFTER you've put your money in."

unfortunately, make the course. Yet, while giving credit where credit is due, I must in fairness to myself claim that I have on my side contributed heavily to Mr. Jenkins' growth in scientific stature. It was I who pointed out to him that his slide rule should have wooden slides in the slots and not mercury held in with Cellophane. It was I who told him that the custom of biologists was to use guinea-pigs and not the guinea-fowl with which he had hitherto worked. It was I, indeed, who put him up to the dodge of using his lips rather than a vacuum-cleaner on the pipette.

It is true we have publicly taken opposite sides in controversies on the principle *ex consensu non oritur veritas*. On many public platforms at a guinea a night with expenses and corkage have we disputed whether country life or town life needs the more science, the rival merits of electricity and magnetism, and whether polished irony is not rather *vieux jeu*. Yet below the heat and fury of our public debates there has been true comradeship betwixt us. No mere flesh-wound has got through to our souls.

Of what then do I complain?—Neglect of my social flair, references to incidents in my past I should wish forgotten and omission of those I should prefer remembered, the casting of ludicrous sidelights, attempts to sow bad blood between Spouse Jenkins and myself, and above all the use of an initial instead of a Christian-name, thus

putting me on a level with W. Hewer and similar hangers-on. It has been suggested, not only by the *hoi polloi*, that I do not really share H. J.'s life at all but have been invented by him as an allegory to assist him in contending for the title of the "English Kafka," competition being very hot. As it is now the fashion to produce allegories which are not allegories of anything in particular but just allegories, I might let this pass, not being, as it were, committed to anything, but I feel it would be mock-modest to disclaim my existence, and wish to place it on record that the Registrar-General appears to be satisfied, even though I might not have been passed by Bishop Berkeley. In my own mind the matter has only once been seriously in doubt, when I met a man at a dinner-party who was my double, and who claimed to be the living image of Rudolph Rassendyl. I need scarcely say how hard it is to be regarded as existing only in a second-class kind of way, as if I were merely H. J.'s ectoplasm or favourite oath.

So far what umbrage I have taken has been at his treatment of me in print, but there is one matter upon which Mr. Jenkins has not ventured to comment to his public or other readers. This is his doing experiments in optics on the same microscope with which most Tuesdays I study bacteriology. Nothing is more confusing in a scientific partnership than this kind of frontier dispute. When I come in all hot-foot with a blood specimen which I have extracted from some soft-hearted donor, often I give a cry of delighted surprise at what I see revealed on the slide, only to find that H. J. has inserted a coloured lens, or, on one occasion, a speckled one, or even filled the spaces between the lenses with distracting liquids. Once he so altered the functioning of the instrument as to make things viewed through it not larger but smaller, thus giving the impression that the specimen under examination contained no blood corpuscles of any kind whatever and leading me to announce the discovery of a new disease which gained some temporary popularity under the name of Smith's Post-graduate Pestilence.

Let me emphasize in conclusion that I do not wish to start any kind of fracas or tit-for-tat; and having given the hatchet an airing I now return it thankfully to its scabbard, confident that in future H. J. will weigh his aspersions before casting them on one who has shown that even a door-mat will turn.





"This may hurt a little."

A Dream Goes West.

(It is reported that the last licensed bath-chair in Bath has been deposited in a local museum.)

SO, Catherine, a cherished dream must fade
By Time's long-handled broom to Limbo swept
And that fond tryst that long ago we made
Can never now be kept;

That pacted secret that between us lay,
Unbreathed in Askelon, untold in Gath—
That we would spend the evening of our day
Bowling around in Bath.

Two bath-chairs—you remember?—side by side
Should promenade the stately streets of Nash
Bearing a couple freed from time and tide
And all life's tedious trash;

You knitting, I reflecting from my stored
Philosophy on foolish toil and fret,
And neither of us hurried, bossed or bored;
And so the sun should set . . .

Alas! it can't be done; we reckoned not
With thrusting science and the pulse of youth;
The last bath-chair is laid away to rot.
I read it. It's the truth.

So be it, comrade; the superior soul
When dreams are blasted turns to dream anew,
Alters the target and amends the goal.
That goes for me and you.

Move with the times, my sweet. The demon Speed
Has robbed us of our Promised Land of rest;
Co-opt him then and yoke him to our need
And utilize the pest.

Propelled by some atomic beastliness
Let rockets twain affront the wondering stars
And—always side by side of course—progress
The rose-red road to Mars.

H. B.



SHORT COMMONS

"You can't have another roll with your soup unless you have sardines on it."

Impressions of Parliament

Business Done

Monday, July 8th.—House of Lords: Retreat.

House of Commons: Flight.

Tuesday, July 9th.—House of Commons: A Tour of the Colonies.

Wednesday, July 10th.—House of Commons: Coal—and Soap.

Thursday, July 11th.—House of Commons: Civil Aviation Flies On.

Monday, July 8th.—Vice-Admiral TAYLOR, the Hon. and gallant Member for Paddington, has the manner (and the voice) associated with the quarter-deck. And when, at the opening of to-day's sitting of the House of Commons, he presented "an humble petition" from inhabitants of the "residential borough of Paddington" against food rationing, the House sat up and took notice.

The Admiral mentioned that the Paddingtonians he represented considered themselves under-nourished and prayed that rations should be increased rather than cut.

As the Admiral tucked the petition underneath his arm—10,000 signatures and all—and prepared to advance to the table with it, Mr. BARNETT JANNER, proclaiming himself a resident of Paddington, asked leave to protest.

But Mr. Speaker mentioned tactfully that old custom ruled that *anybody* could present a petition. So Mr. JANNER subsided, the Admiral bowed and advanced, and the petition (10,000 signatures and all) went into the special sack behind Mr. Speaker's chair.

Mr. RUPERT DE LA BÈRE, who finds so many things "thoroughly unsatisfactory," caused a flutter on the Treasury Bench by inquiring which of the Ministers was his rightful prey on Unrra matters. Detecting the shape of questions to come (followed by the inevitable explosions of declamatory protest) all the Ministers tried to look as if they had never even heard of Unrra, but Mr. HERBERT MORRISON, who replied on behalf of the Prime Minister, said the Foreign Secretary, Mr. ERNEST BEVIN, would answer some questions, the President of the Board of Trade, Sir STAFFORD CRIPPS, others.

Mr. DE LA BÈRE seemed a little abashed at the mention of two Ministers so well able to take care of themselves, but he roared that the people of Britain wanted the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth. With which profound observation he left the subject.

Incidentally, Sir STAFFORD CRIPPS

got the loudest cheer of his Parliamentary career on his return from the mission to India. He seemed startled—if gratified—by it. The House is swift to recognize good and sincere work, whoever does it.

The business of the House was a discussion on the Civil Aviation Bill, which went on until a late hour but eventually touched down safely. It has, however, some further distance to go, and Pilot IVOR THOMAS, Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Civil Aviation, has not yet completed his task. But Lord WINSTER, the



"TO SEEK ANOTHER'S PROFIT"

"The Government intends . . . to enable the colonies speedily and substantially to improve their economic and social conditions."—Mr. George Hall.

Minister, watching from a control-tower seat in the Peers' Gallery, seemed satisfied with the journey so far.

Over in their Lordships' House Lord BEVERIDGE (Sir WILLIAM as was) was rallying the Conservative and Liberal forces in defence of the Friendly Societies and their part in the running of the National Insurance plan. He wanted them to keep their traditional rôle as middlemen between the Government and the consumer (so to speak) and to ensure the continuity of things.

And he made a powerful speech demanding that his views be accepted. Noble lords behind and beside him cheered and hurled defiance at the Government benches. Lord BEVERIDGE

grew more and more eloquent. The defiance grew more and more defiant.

Then the Lord Chancellor, Lord JOWITT, replied. His reply was to the effect that there was "nothin' doin'" and that the Friendly Societies were "out" even if it meant that they were no longer friendly.

Sir HENRY BADELEY, Clerk of the Parliaments, and Mr. R. L. OVERBURY, Clerk of the House, sharpened their pencils in readiness to record the fifth Government defeat by their Lordships in a fortnight. Lord BEVERIDGE and his followers made fierce noises and all seemed set for battle.

But after the noise had gone on for some time longer, Baron BEVERIDGE (assuming the rôle of a certain noble Duke) marched his men down again, and there was no division.

Whereat the Lord Chancellor smiled considerably.

Tuesday, July 9th.—The House of Commons had an extraordinarily "dressy" appearance, not entirely explained by the prevailing heat-wave. Truth was that most Members were going to a Royal garden-party at Buckingham Palace—and very smart they looked. Miss ALICE BACON and Lady MEGAN LLOYD GEORGE, in diaphanous flowery creations which made the perspiring male feel cooler merely to look upon, easily carried off the honours for attractiveness and chic.

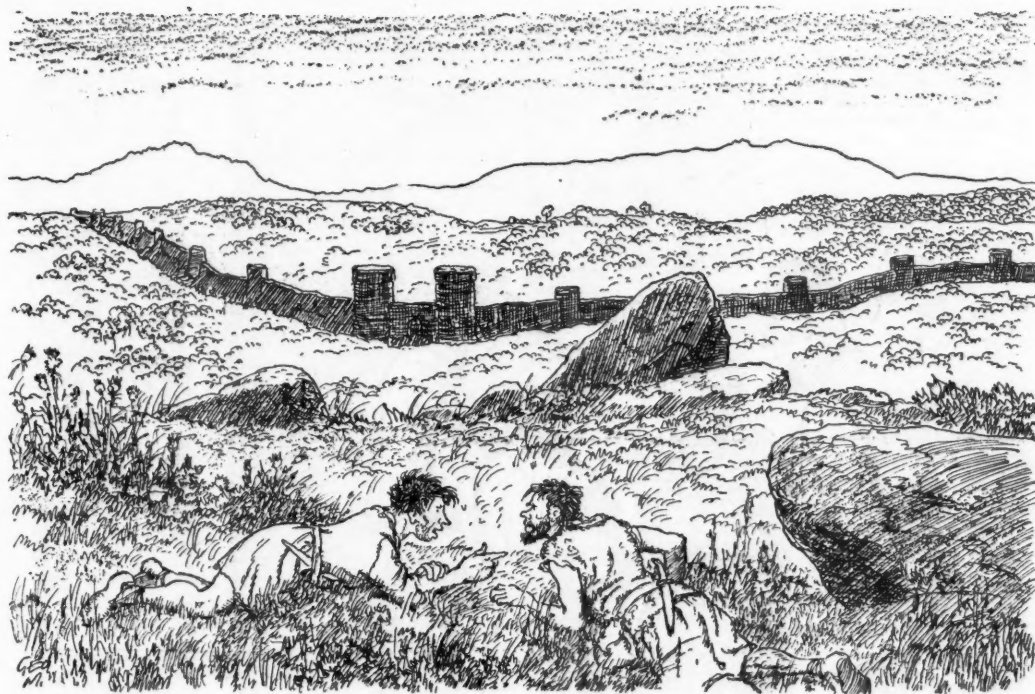
But Mr. WILLIAM GALLACHER, leader of the Communist M.P. (who may or may not have been going to the Party), ran them close by appearing in a sports-jacket and a pair of slacks of a vivid blue that even the most rigid of Tories need not have despised. He got a special cheer to himself.

Incidentally, he got a special laugh to himself a little later, when the Chancellor of the Exchequer was about to answer a suggestion that farthings should be abolished from our coinage.

"Before this question is answered, Mr. Speaker," said Mr. GALLACHER gravely, "may I ask that you will prohibit, in the reply, *any mention of Scotland?*"

The Chancellor contrived to defend the half-bawbee without once mentioning Scotland. Whether or not this was a triumph for Mr. GALLACHER we may never know.

Mr. JACK LAWSON, the War Minister, revealed that he was burdened with a large-sized edition of the problem of what to do with used razor-blades. Apparently, he has some millions of shells for which he has to find storage-space, and, as nobody wants them piled up in beauty spots, on building or agricultural land, or anywhere else, the shells are a bit of a problem. When



"Just think what devilment Hadrian may be up to beyond yon iron curtain—if I might coin a phrase."

a Member accused the War Office of "hanging on to" land unnecessarily, Mr. LAWSON replied, with pathos, that some millions of tons of ammunition were "hanging on to" him. Quite touching, it was.

Mr. DALTON, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, winged these golden words—which were loudly cheered by the Conservatives: "We must set our faces against useless hordes of officials."

He also said, with challenge in his voice, that he would like to hear of ship-repair space available—clearly implying that there was none.

Whereupon Major BRUCE, who rather specializes in brick-dropping in spite of the fact that he is Mr. ANEURIN BEVAN's Parliamentary Private Secretary, disconcerted the Head of the Treasury by mentioning that there's plenty of space in Portsmouth. When the Conservative cheers and laughter had died down the Chancellor accepted from the Major a written statement on the subject.

Business of the day was a discussion on the Colonies, ably opened by Mr. GEORGE HALL, the Colonial Secretary.

Wednesday, July 10th.—Questions over, the House turned its attention to the Bill to nationalize the coal industry. This had been sent down from the House of Lords with many amendments—some of them altering the measure, as the lawyers say, in "material particulars." And, knowing that combative Mr. EMANUEL SHINWELL, the Minister of Fuel, was in charge, the House expected fireworks and sulphurous denunciation.

But Mr. SHINWELL rivalled Mr. HERBERT MORRISON in blandness, and, before the evening was out, admitted that their Lordships had actually improved the Bill, and accepted all the alterations. In face of this Conservative Members were shocked (just a little) when Mr. HAROLD MACMILLAN commented a trifle acidly that if the Commons had not been so rushed by the Government the Bill would not have needed so much alteration by the Lords.

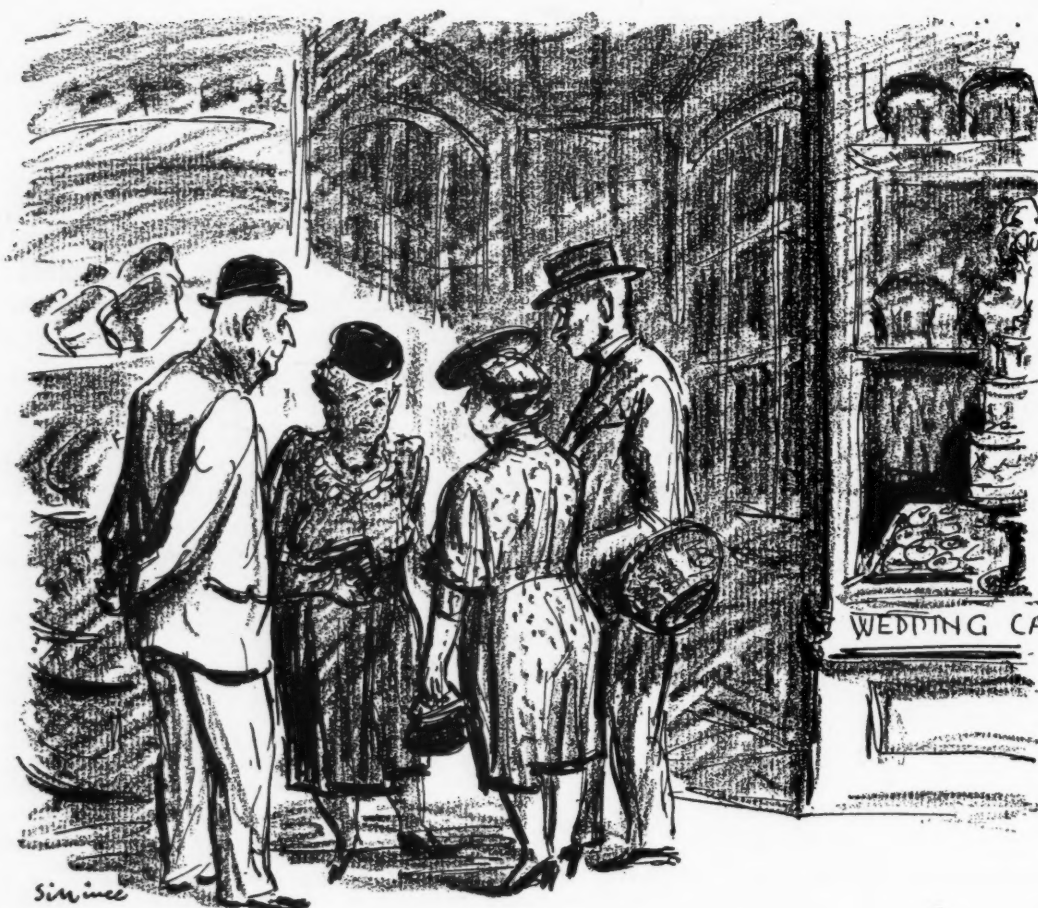
Sir JOHN MELLOR then moved the rejection of the Minister of Food's order that the soap ration be cut, and Mr. JOHN STRACHEY, the Food Minister, promised that he would leave

no ground-nut unground, no herring unsqueezed, in the search for fats with which to make soap. He also said he had already scoured the world for soap—not *with* it—that he intended to clean up the black market in soap, that we were no longer on velvet so far as fats were concerned and that we had little to look forward to in the field of edible fats. Then he sat down.

Mr. R. S. HUDSON asked the Minister for a few figures about the imports of raw materials for soap. Being haughtily refused the figures, on the ground that they were highly secret, Mr. HUDSON proceeded to give them to the Minister—from the pages of a Government publication! A neat piece of work.

Of course the Government won the day, and soap will stay short.

Thursday, July 11th.—To-day the Commons said farewell to the Civil Aviation Bill as it winged its way to the Statute Book. For some reason unexplained the House seemed in extraordinarily good humour and laughter was general. Maybe it was the weather. Or maybe that the holidays are nearing.



"We hope you'll all come over to tea sometime—any day before the twenty-first of July."

Two Teeth

MY friend George is a big tough fellow, but as he told me this story I thought he would cry. "I was playing cricket yesterday", he said, "against a Navy team. They won the toss and batted. Before we began one of the sailors came up to me and said: 'Weren't we at school together?'"

"I looked the usual polite blank.

"'Moore,' he said, 'Captain Moore.'

"He was a very handsome sailor, with an intelligent gentle face, almost too gentle for a captain, one would have said.

"Something came back to me.

"'You were in Hook's?' I said.

"'Yes.'

"'I remember. You're a left-hander.'

"'Yes,' he said.

"I was pleased at remembering this, for, after all, it was—what?—nearly forty years since I had seen the fellow. But somehow I got the impression that there was something else he thought I ought to remember.

"I said, 'Fancy meeting you', or something equally silly, and went out to field, still trying to remember. Had he been captain of something or other? Not in my time, certainly. Nor later.

"Of course not. I could see the chap clearly now—the young chap. A slender, delicate, beautiful kid. Nothing against him, but nothing of note in his history, I was sure. Not even much of a scholar. Quiet, sensitive—almost a mother's darling. However, here he was, a captain, R.N. It

only shows, I thought—I don't quite know what.

"I was fielding silly mid-on. As you know, I rather fancy my fielding. So does my side. That's why I was there. Presently Captain Moore came in. I had a good view of him now, and, while he was taking guard I tried to remember again.

"I could see the boy so clearly now. He was just about my own age, but slighter, smaller—as he is to-day. Pale. Almost pathetic. He had a charming smile. Very good teeth. And suddenly I remembered!

"We had had a fight. The only fight of my life. I hadn't wanted that one; and even now I couldn't remember what it was about. It was the usual schoolboy nonsense—some old custom

or rule or something. They said we must fight, and we did. We went behind the Science School, I remember, which for some reason was the place for fights."

"Who won?" I said.

"I did, of course. I was much too big for him. I'm afraid I knocked him about pretty badly. The other little beasts were yelling us on, you know. One had to. But I didn't enjoy it. In fact, I disliked it very much. I can see the poor kid's face to-day. I knocked two teeth out—two perfect front teeth!"

"It upset me for a long time. I remember how horrified my mother was when she heard about it. And of course it was no use telling her about school customs and so on. She thought I was just a big bully. And I wasn't, I really wasn't. I suppose, in a way, the thing was a bit of education. I never fought anyone else. And, as you know, I'm a pretty reasonable chap—believe in hearing the other side, and so on. Perhaps it was that poor kid and his two teeth had something to do with it. But I know that at the time it upset me a lot. For months I used to go hot all over when I thought about it."

"And yet I'd forgotten all about it. It only shows."

"What?"

"Can't say. The effect of gin, perhaps," said George. "Anyhow, believe me or not, I went fairly hot all over yesterday, as I stood there at silly mid-on, and it all came back to me. It was a safe bet the Captain hadn't forgotten about it. Probably, in his case, it was one of those early memories that stick in the mind for ever, and, nowadays, have to be dug out by a trick-cyclist—"

"Psychiatrist?"

"Trick-cyclist," said George. "And what a toad he must have thought me—forgetting all about it! I don't think I've ever blushed at silly mid-on before: but believe me, old boy, yesterday I did."

"And, of course, at that moment Captain Moore sends me the simplest, silliest, soppiest catch ever known in the history of cricket. It should go into *Wisden's*. It wasn't low. It wasn't quick. It slowly dolloped up off the shoulder of his bat, and dolloped down again. A child could have caught it. Any child would have caught it. Catching wasn't necessary. If that ball had fallen on a sleeping baby the baby wouldn't have stirred. If it had come down on top of a sunflower it would have remained there, motionless. If it had fallen on a pat of butter there would have been no

mark, I swear. It was that sort of velocity, that sort of catch. And I dropped it. I was blushing about the Captain's teeth."

"Well, after that the pale, sensitive Captain hit almost every ball for four, and one or two for six. There were no more silly mid-ons, and he knocked up a brisk 89 not out before lunch. You can imagine how high my credit stood at lunch-time. And I still had to apologize to the Captain."

"I didn't see him to speak to at lunch. He was at the other end. But when I went into the wash-place afterwards he was there. There was a queue, of course, and the basin that fell free first was next to his."

"Jolly good knock, sir," I said, as I began the old ablutions.

"Thank you," he said, shyly. Then he said with a smile 'And when I say "Thank you," I mean "Thank you."'

"How right you are," I said—or something—

"The same old charming smile. The same perfect teeth."

"But not quite. For just then, quite naturally and quickly, as one does, he slipped out a top denture and held it under the tap. Sorry to be indelicate, old boy, but this is a story."

"Go on."

"On the plate were two teeth—just two front teeth."

"Did I know where to look? Did I blush? I hoped—how I hoped!—that he'd pop out a lower denture as well, with rows of teeth on it! But no. That was the only thing wrong with this splendid fellow. Two front teeth. And that was *me*. What a bore it must have been to him all these years—that wretched plate, with those two silly teeth! And all because of *me*."

"And I had just been going to make a semi-jocular apology for the 'incident'."

"Which, as a matter of fact, is more or less what I did. Only there was no apology. I got as far as saying that I'd now remembered, we'd had a bit of a disagreement behind the Science School. And he said 'Good Lord, was that you? I'd quite forgotten'."

"Then, with another of those charming smiles the Captain went in again, and was bowled at last for 117."

"He passed me on his way back to the pavilion (I was long-stop now). I congratulated him, and he said, again with that smile: 'Thank you. One tooth back, I think.'"

"Moving episode," I said.

"Yes," said George. "But that wasn't the end."

"What was the end?"

"He bowled me second ball."

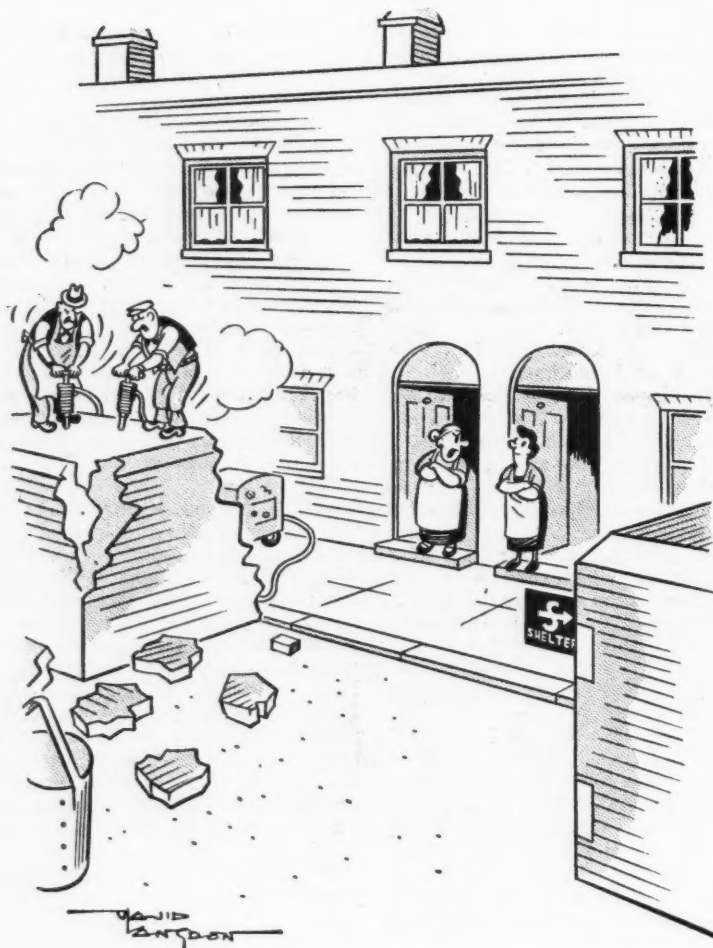
A. P. H.

At the Ballet

"MR. PUNCH" (SADLER'S WELLS)
NEW YORK BALLET THEATRE
(COVENT GARDEN)

MR. PUNCH is highly gratified to record that, like his Russian cousin Petrouchka who was immortalized thirty-five years ago by Fokine and Stravinsky, he has become the hero of a ballet. *Mr. Punch*, produced by the BALLET RAMBERT to celebrate their twentieth birthday, is a witty presentation of the more spectacular episodes in a long and heroic career. At Sadler's Wells Mr. Punch sees himself beating Mrs. Punch, throwing the baby out of the window and fighting the police; but he put all such youthful excesses behind him when he assumed his present rôle just one hundred and five years ago to-day. Even in his unregenerate days, as frequenters of the fair-ground will remember, he was on intimate terms with the Seven Champions of Christendom; and if, as the ballet reminds him, he was acquainted with the inside of a prison, he sat in the lap of the Queen of Sheba as well as in that of the Law. He sees with pride how he worsted the Devil in combat; but for him the proudest moment of all is to see himself hang Jack Ketch the hangman, for Mr. Punch was ever foremost in denouncing the dreadful law that sent many a poor wretch to the gallows for stealing.

He protests, however, at his impersonator's nose and hump. Mr. Punch's hump is not a mere excrescence attached to his shirt, swinging about like the swings at a fair, nor is his nose the nose of an ordinary commonplace puppet. WALTER GORE's make-up hardly does justice to Mr. Punch's noble proboscis, his benign smile, his splendid thrusting chin. There is, however, plenty of invention, colour, vim and vigour in Mr. GORE's choreography and in the presentation of the drama, all of which Mr. Punch applauds. RONALD WILSON's scenery and costumes are bright and cheerful, as is ARTHUR OLDHAM's music. JOYCE GRAEME in purple and orange and, alas! two lovely black eyes, is excellent in the rather trying rôle of *Mrs. Punch*. SALLY GILMOUR as *Pretty Polly*, dressed like a bunch of Parma violets, is pretty enough to have walked off Dicky Doyle's cover, and SYLVIA BRIAR is a sagacious *Dog Toby* with an obvious future as Toby, M.P. Mr. Punch observed with satisfaction that his impersonator was presented with



"Shame in a way, ain't it, reelly?"

a copy of his current issue, which is just as it should be.

We have to thank the Ballet Theatre of New York, who have come to Covent Garden, for a beautiful performance of *Les Sylphides*, the best we have seen in London for many a long day. The tempo at which they dance it is considerably slower than that to which we are accustomed, but what an improvement it is! Here are the *Sylphides* we have longed to see—unhurried, light as air, filling with soft movement every note of music so that they seem to be floating on its surface like water-lilies on a lake, the movement of their arms gentle as the

noiseless ripples stirred by the breeze of a summer night. The soloists—BARBARA FALLIS, ALICIA ALONSO, NORA KAYE and ANDRE EGLEVSKY—dance with poetic feeling, and the performance as a whole is a joy. It is a great pity that a tasteless, unimaginative décor, after a Corot picture, should be used instead of the original Benois design, with the full moon shining through the ruins of a monastery, ghostly leafless trees and the faint outline of a tomb in the background—all expressing to perfection the sultry, voluptuous melancholy which pervades the music of Chopin. The décor at Covent Garden expresses nothing at all. All the more credit

to the dancers that they overcome such a handicap and convey the feeling of the music so well.

After this rare treat the rest of the first-night programme was a great disappointment. The second ballet was *Fancy Free*, about three sailors on shore leave. There is an effective backcloth of soaring blue skyscrapers studded with lighted windows, but otherwise this ballet is ugly and depressing—depressing as a vignette of life in a big city; depressing that the spiritual vacuity of the young should be such that they can do nothing better with their leisure than lounge in and out of bars and stand at street corners chewing gum waiting for cheap amorous adventure; depressing that the contortions and acrobatics of the music-hall should invade the realm of ballet; and depressing that a good orchestra should have to emit noises as ugly as those invented by LEONARD BERNSTEIN, who conducted. In short, *Fancy Free* is the reverse of Beerbohm Tree's *Hamlet*—it is "vulgar without being funny." By contrast, ballet-goers may remember Kurt Jooss's *Sailors' Fancy*, a charming ballet on the same theme. We then had the *grand pas de deux* from act three of *Swan Lake*, in which NORA KAYE achieved thirty-one of the famous thirty-two *fouettés* and ANDRE EGLEVSKY danced superbly.

Next came *Bluebeard*. It seems incredible that FOKINE should be its author. The music is by OFFENBACH and the ballet is said to be inspired by the *opéra bouffe* by MEILHAC and HALEVY. It takes place at the court of *King Bobiche* at the beginning of the sixteenth century, and concerns the infidelities of *Queen Clementine* and the philanderings of *Baron Bluebeard*. It is a compound of comic-strip humour, crude pantomime and feeble choreography. The scenario, allied to the genius of Walt Disney, might have resulted in an animated cartoon of whimsical charm; but enacted by ballet dancers in pretty sixteenth-century dresses it is infantile and boring. One of the settings is a prettified mediæval castle, another a similarly prettified necromancer's laboratory, and the third is a cornfield full of shepherds and peasants, the whole scene looking exactly like an advertisement for breakfast cereals.

D. C. B.

"SIR,—The last straw has snapped!"
Letter to the "Daily Graphic."

And we are left clinging to the camel's back.

At the Play

"DON JUAN IN HELL" (ARTS)

"NIETZSCHE might really have done some good," wrote G. K. Chesterton, "if he had taught Bernard Shaw to draw the sword, to drink wine, or even to dance. But he only succeeded in putting into his head a new superstition, which bids fair to be the chief superstition of the dark ages which are possibly in front of us—I mean the superstition of what is called the superman." That was not only shrewd criticism but a pretty good shot, in 1909, at the way the world and in particular Nietzsche's own country would go. We are at the moment sinking into a post-war trough where the idea of the superman is not only out of fashion but an object of suspicion and indeed nausea to the common man; but this polished performance of the Don Juan scene from *Man and Superman* shows G. B. S. to have as fresh a claim as ever to be a very special sort of mortal. He will be ninety this month, and the Arts has put on this production to mark the occasion. One wonders whether any other dramatist since Sophocles has written so successfully and with such undiminished vigour over so long a period of time.

Nearly everything that he has to say in this scene, which lasts for the best part of two unbroken hours, is worth hearing again, and the brilliance of the monologues (for the speeches are too long to be called anything else) still dazzles. If Mr. SHAW had written nothing else he could take his stand on this piece as a great writer; it is intoxicating stuff that leaves behind it the dazed feeling that one has been watching the gods playing table-tennis. It takes a bit of following, but it matters little with which of the strange quartet you agree in their discussion of Woman, and Marriage, and War, and Fun-For-Its-Own-Sake, and the Brain versus the Animal, and all the other things which any four good talkers would be likely to tackle round a bottle at a café table; or

whether you agree with them at all. *Don Juan*, whose cool philosophy is in revolt against the sentimental comfortableness of a five-star Hell admirably managed by a hedonistic *Devil*, has the best of it before he takes up his option on a transfer to Heaven, and Mr. ALEC CLUNES brings splendid diction and a quick intelligence to the part. Mr. JOHN SLATER makes a superbly self-satisfied *Devil*, Miss JEAN ANDERSON puts the distaff case stoutly, and as an early Colonel Blimp Mr. OLIVER BURT speaks with as bow-

when its blunt exposition of the domestic consequences of war must have been painfully near the knuckle; its effectiveness in the theatre should have been, even so, irresistible. Mr. SOMERSET MAUGHAM tells us in the preface to his collected plays that he expected nothing for it. "During the rehearsals of this piece I amused myself by devising the way in which it might have been written to achieve popularity. Any dramatist will see how easily the changes could have been made." But while it is amusing

to toy with one's own private variations, any addition of sugar which would have detracted from the force of the last curtain would have been something of a crime. It is an astonishing situation. We are in the living-room of *Ardsley*, the bombastic country solicitor, and among those present are the following: His wife, who has just been given a few months to live; his son, completely blinded in the war and consumed with bitterness; his eldest daughter, married to a soak; his second daughter, turned into a martyr by the loss of her lover in the war and now crazed by the suicide of a man she has set her heart on; and his third daughter, about to run away with an elderly voluptuary in a desperate attempt to escape the fate of her sisters. This is the hilarious moment chosen by *Ardsley*, the optimist, the respected citizen, the representative windbag, to make a little speech of domestic and national satisfaction. At which the mad girl, in a

cracked voice, begins to sing "God Save The King."

The only points at which the play seems out of gear in 1946 are in the incapacity of the blind man, who would surely be doing some work, and in the dilemma of the youngest girl, who would no longer have so much difficulty in making a sensible life for herself. This production is slow for the first two acts, but it comes very much to life in the third act, when Miss JOAN MILLER, in Miss Robson's old part of *Eva*, tears us to ribbons, and Mr. JULIAN D'ALBIE imbues *Ardsley* with a wonderful thickness of understanding. ERIC.



WORDS, NOT DEEDS

<i>The Statue</i>	MR. OLIVER BURT
<i>The Devil</i>	MR. JOHN SLATER
<i>Don Juan</i>	MR. ALEC CLUNES
<i>Dona Ana de Ulloa</i>	MISS JEAN ANDERSON

legged an authority as if he were in fact occupying an arm-chair in a window in Pall Mall.

It is a refreshing production (by Mr. PETER POWELL), and one is downright sorry when *Don Juan* takes off for Heaven, perhaps to claim, who knows, the halo being relinquished at about the same time though in somewhat different circumstances by Miss Gingold at the Ambassadors.

"FOR SERVICES RENDERED" (NEW LINDSEY THEATRE CLUB)

It is still difficult to understand why this play failed, though admittedly it was put on in 1932 during the slump,



"... and the cake can be used for a bread-pudding."

Our Booking-Office

(By Mr. Punch's Staff of Learned Clerks)

Uttleyana

A CHILD'S response to beauty exceeds as a rule, that of a man who has wholly left his childhood behind him; and it is not every mature memory that can recapture a young explorer's delight in the loveliness of the world on which he finds himself landed. Fortunate in her world, and as fortunate in her memory, Mrs. ALISON UTTLEY has already seen *The Country Child* run through four editions; and readers of *Country Things* (FABER, 6/-) will find a dozen aspects of the earlier book developed in the twelve delightful essays of the later one. If "Mackery End" is an essay, "Attics and Garrets" and "Little Houses" are essays; though there is nothing of the Elian preciousness—either for good or evil—about Mrs. UTTLEY's pictures of little farmhouse libraries with books stitched into brown paper covers; of chalybeate springs shared by men and cattle for their common health; of story-tellers in a lamp-lit farmhouse kitchen: whose stories, legendary or topical, enlivened a whole household, applied to such handicrafts as each member fancied, during the long winter evenings. The essays have all the style they need—neither less nor more; and the same may be said of Mr. C. F. Tunncliffe's sympathetic illustrations.

H. P. E.

Oh, Mr. Petunia!

Once upon a time (about a hundred years ago) there lived a clockmaker in Virginia who had an inferiority complex, and my, how people paid for it! *Mr. Petunia* (CONSTABLE, 8/6) is an attempted study in the form of fiction of a type of character which has no business to be so common as it is. For the clockmaker, who perhaps deserves to be called a genius at his profession and is recognized as such, is not content with legitimate esteem. He must be cock of all walks, lover, intriguer, power behind the throne, raconteur—master, in short, even of any subject that comes

up in talk; and as this is practically impossible for anyone who is not a Leonardo he is always feeling injured. Thus, a woman says something careless but slighting, he essays her (for revenge) and is laughed at, and then, once she is married, he starts a vindictive rumour about her that is no less unpardonable for being true. The clockmaker's lust for power is of course not limited to power over women. Power over anyone—a so-called niece, the potman at the inn, the bluff, ignorant, talkative Irish trainer and riding-master—will do, but Dr. OLIVER ST. JOHN GOGARTY makes it difficult to decide the nature and extent of this power in most instances. Reading Dr. GOGARTY, at least in this book, is like climbing through barbed wire or over broken glass. Beyond, surely, lies a prospect, a view of character, even a humorous conception of life, but to reach these one must first pass a manner of writing that makes no concessions to mere communication. Sometimes, indeed, it is hard to tell even what is going on.

J. S.

On Ireland

The Irish Tangle for English Readers (MACDONALD, 10/6) is, Mr. SHANE LESLIE tells us, the fruit of "a life-long acquaintance and an amused understanding of both north and south." Begun and completed in Mr. LESLIE's home, a border castle between County Monaghan and the North, it is equally amiable and sympathetic about Orangemen and Fenians, and would probably have ensured attempts on its author's life from both sides, had it been published sixty to seventy years ago. It is a pleasantly discursive book, mingling history and personal reminiscences. After telling us, for example, about the Valley of the Black Pig, rumoured to be the future scene of an Irish Armageddon, Mr. LESLIE recounts how he was led by some peasants to its legendary site—"Up a remote hillside under heavy thorn and gorse camouflage lay a wee bit of a ditch sixteen centuries old. Then I knew the feeling behind the proverb: 'Old as the hills.'" Parnell and Redmond are Mr. LESLIE's chief heroes among those who fought for Ireland's independence, but he writes with almost equal regard and admiration of Carson and Craigavon. While regretting that Ireland did not seize the golden chance of joining in the last war "not as England's minion but as Britain's ally," Mr. LESLIE points out that Southern Ireland supplied England with a vast amount of food, with a superb contribution of fighting men, and with nearly two hundred thousand workers in her war industries; and her coasts were more effectively manned than in the first German war.

H. K.

"Sweet is the Lore which Nature Brings."

Centuries before Marie Antoinette dipped her fingers in the curds and whey of the Petit Trianon, a casual return to Nature was man's easiest riposte to a corrupt society. And just as Georgian peers, neither devout nor eremitic, took evasive action in grottoes, so the Chicago business men of to-day thumb over their Thoreau and exhibit a consuming interest in wild life as featured in newspapers and magazines. Mr. DONALD CULROSS PEATTIE is one of the happiest of his country's ministers to this vicarious taste for Nature; and *The Road of a Naturalist* (HALE, 12/6) tells how he proceeded, from cub-reporter of kidnappings and murders to botanical research and hence to the vivid portrayal of his own skilled work as a field naturalist. His chosen terrain is usually a desert; and although he thinks more highly of beasts than of the present run of mankind, the finest chapter of his book relates a human tragedy in South Utah—a mineral wilderness where even the iodine bush is bloated with poisonous salts. He cherishes the hope

that his own religion—Nature—will reunite the “placental mammals” who have so easily outstripped the rest of their kind in destructiveness. But, even so, he admits, “We are not God; we cannot make America over again as it was in the beginning.”

H. P. E.

Robert Burns

The Wind that Shakes the Barley (COLLINS, 9/6) is the first volume of a trilogy in which Mr. JAMES BARKE is covering the life of Robert Burns. Mr. BARKE uses the mixture of fiction and biography now in fashion. A biographer would quote directly from Burns in order to evoke a picture of his early surroundings. Mr. BARKE's method is to interweave lines from Burns in what purports to be an inside account of Burns's life: for example—“But there was time for playing. Time for running about the braes, for paddling in the burn and for pulling the gowans fine. Time for roving about the banks of bonnie Doon, for bird-nesting in the green shaws and along the bosky linn. Time for watching the long-eared hares leaping on the grassy knowe . . .” and so on. The advantage of this method is that nothing is left to the reader's imagination. All he has to do is to float comfortably down the stream of Mr. BARKE's brimming fancy. Its disadvantage is that the reality of Burns's experiences is diluted and dissolved in a haze of fine writing. “She sucked the air into her contracted lungs in urgent spasms; her bosom heaved.” This is one sentence from a chapter devoted to a detailed account of what happened on the occasion celebrated by Burns in his brief and incomparable poem—“It was upon a Lammas night.” Mr. BARKE has ability, but in its present undisciplined state it is not of much service to Burns.

H. K.

Those Were the Days.

The Merry Wives of Westminster (MACMILLAN, 12/6) is the third volume of Mrs. BELLOC LOWNDES' autobiography, and covers the years from 1896, when she married, to the outbreak of the first world war. It is a valuable addition to Edwardian social history as much for its well-informed commentary on the leaders of politics and letters as for its entertaining account of how rich life could be for a literary family in that pocket—“more or less like a cathedral close”—where the houses of Lord North Street, Great College Street, Cowley Street and Barton Street carry the good manners of the eighteenth century on their small tranquil faces. Through her own growing reputation as a novelist and her friendly zest for people and also through her husband's work on *The Times* Mrs. LOWNDES went everywhere and fortunately kept a diary. Edward Grey, then the youngest member of the House, took her over it, and many years later, in July 1914, she was to meet him constantly at Lord Glenconner's house, when his anxiety about Germany's intentions matched that which, with her French blood, she had always felt herself. Asquith, the best read in English of all the men she met, was disconcerted to discover her at the age of eighteen the only guest at his table who knew Cobbett. We find Henry James, when a hostess had made an unfair attack on Hugh Walpole, seizing Mrs. LOWNDES' arm and crying “Let you and me, who are friends of Walpole, leave this house!” which they did; her brother, Hilaire Belloc, lecturing the Commons on the importance of artillery; and Maurice Hewlett angrily reconciling the purchase of a first-class ticket with his Socialist principles by declaring it to be the duty of brain-workers to avoid fatigue. It is pleasant, too, to note her appreciation of the kindness and charm of Anstey Guthrie. That she writes too modestly and too little of her own work is a shortcoming as engaging as it is rare. E. O. D. K.

Beatrix Potter

“She was growing up, and even when she put up her hair, and began to wear long dresses with a bustle, and on Sundays a gold watch and chain, nobody appears to have taken any notice.” That is from Miss MARGARET LANE's biography, *The Tale of Beatrix Potter* (FREDERICK WARNE, 12/6), and later in the same chapter we read a letter from Miss POTTER herself—“Bertram has gone away to Scotland; he had a jackdaw and a dog as well—such a many parcels. I shall have still more; a rabbit, a large family of snails and eleven minnows! I shall have to squirt air into the bottle to keep the minnows alive. I bought two squirts for fear one might break.” Those two quotations show much that is expanded in the book. The one gives the sadness of the very lonely life of the child and young girl in an austere London house—the other shows the humanity and precision of the artist. Miss LANE has made much of very little, for her subject appears to have been as shy and tricky and, sometimes, belligerent as the small creatures she painted. Her parents objected to her engagement to her publisher, but she was inflexible, and would have married him if he had not died. Later she did marry and then “her brief exuberant creative period came to an end.” One cannot regret that particular happy ending, for that particular fine, bracing, warm-hearted and tetchy personality needed more than the fame that even her perfect children's books could give. Her life, as we read it, seems, somehow, admirably suited to the creator of *Peter Rabbit* and his numerous colleagues, and Miss LANE has dealt loyally and suitably with it—so have the publishers, whose reproductions of the pictures are exquisite. B. E. B.

The Run of the Game

Only very occasionally in Sir CHARLES PETRIE's latest historical survey do major world changes present themselves as factors determining the affairs of nations. His *Diplomatic History, 1713-1933* (HOLLIS AND CARTER, 18/-), frankly regards the earth as an open chess-board on which various groups of people, unified as pieces or pawns, may be moved at the caprice of players not always skilful, honest or far-sighted. His conclusion would seem to be that statesmen have stumbled or been tricked into one unnecessary war after another through simple bad diplomacy, while avoiding about an equal number of further conflicts when their technique has been good. The supreme master of this dubious craft the writer holds to have been not Napoleon or even his own favourite Canning, but Bismarck; and Sedan rather than Waterloo seems to him to mark the real end of France's long domination of Europe. Yet neither the Napoleonic episode, nor the rise of Prussia, nor even the brisk affair of 1914-1918 is represented as based on great movements in population, say, or on the progress of science and exploration, or on spontaneous upthrusts for freedom, so much as on the turn and luck of the play. History written in this soothing academic vein, in which the smiles of a monarch in a foreign capital or the party jealousies of an election campaign may go far to bring peace or war to millions, becomes in Sir CHARLES' hands very pleasant, almost story-book, reading. All the same one can never quite get away from the feeling that the flaming passions of innumerable vitally individual men and women are struck to life with every move from square to square. Perhaps it is the supreme art of the writer to convey his indictment, his hatred of those who play with futile wars, by the subtlest kind of restrained suggestion rather than by any blare of strident indignation.

C. C. P.



The Deliberate Mistake or . . .

ANOTHER thing I have learned about writing is that it should be done with one eye on the public and another (if possible a larger one) on publicity. No writer gets very far nowadays until his name has become a household word, a word on the tip of everybody's tongue. Now, names ending in "O" and "EX" and so on obviously have the best chance of achieving such fame—a writer of detective fiction called Smithex couldn't possibly fail—but let us confine our attentions here to names without any clear literary merit. Let me tell you how to hit the headlines without any expensive interviews with the gentlemen of the press.

The best publicity for any novelist is to have his stuff quoted as intensively and extensively as possible. You wouldn't think this—the opening sentence of my novel *Charles Rides High*—exceptionally quotable, would you?

"About five or six o'clock Zaphjey met the queer woman and her dog."

But look at it again:

"About five or six o'clock Zaphjey met the queer woman and her dog"

—and you will see that this simple sentence contains every letter of the alphabet and is therefore entirely suitable to illustrate the various type-faces used by printers. That sentence of mine has appeared, to my knowledge, in Bembo, Garamond, Baskerville, Caslon, Pretty Lily, Minotaur and Hypericum, and I attribute seventy-five per cent. of the sales of a somewhat humdrum novel to the free advertisement won by its opening sentence.

I mention this only as an example of what *can* be done. Much more obvious of course is the idea of the two- or three-decker title. Shakespeare knew all about this, but his sub-title "Or What You Will" is much too loose to win general support. Carlyle got nearer the ideal with *Sart or Resartus*,* but not near enough, I think. You should try to round up as many readers as possible—those who favour crime detection, the plough and furrow brigade and the lovers of historical fiction. So why not

*The Compost-Heap Murder Case
or Half-hours with Talleyrand?*

* — or *The London Charivari* is not too bad either.

Quite apart from its wider appeal the multiple title enables the author to derive maximum advantage from the disposal of film rights. As soon as his novel has been bought up and renamed by Hollywood he should switch the title and sub-title(s) round for the next edition. He should then sell the thing again quite easily (to the same film company) and earn a useful if spurious reputation as a prolific writer.

Another thing you can do is to provide for reviewers a chapter summarizing the entire contents of your book. You will remember that Mr. Bernard Shaw did this in his last work—and did it quite nicely too, except that he forgot to add an abridgement of the summary for reviewers pressed for time.

If such a chapter is written carefully the author can more or less assure himself of good notices. Say something like this "Saul Bodkin (your hero) was inordinately long but closely woven, stimulating and carefully presented," and you can bet your boots some reviewer will write "The author's description of Saul Bodkin, '... inordinately long but closely woven, stimulating and carefully presented

... is as near as I can get to a final judgment of this book." And he'll think himself pretty smart, too.

See what I mean?

In another of my books I purposely made a few mistakes and printed them conspicuously in heavier type. The psychology behind this move is simple: a reviewer loves to point out literal and factual errors but he can only do so—and at the same time avoid niggardliness and captiousness—by throwing in his corrections as ballast to a fairly favourable criticism. So do not be afraid to write "the World War of 1914-1916," "Mr. Winston Stanley Churchill," and so on.

(And now, to conclude, let's see what kind of a reviewer *you* would make. Hidden in this article there is just one deliberate mistake. Got it?) Hod.

Hen

THE impending reduction of the poultry food ration to infinitesimal proportions has, according to the newspapers, caused nationwide indignation and precipitated a storm of protest. It means, I gather, that hardly anybody in England will be able to keep hens any more.

Well, if I'm one of the nation—and I suppose I'm in process of being nationalized along with everything else important—the newspapers have made an inaccurate statement in estimating the nation's width. And if there is a storm of protest, here's one little wave that's not beating furiously against the cliffs, but is rippling placidly along with a contented smile.

For I personally shall be only too glad to get rid of our hens. I speak as one who, returning to Civvy Street after five and a half years, finds that his household has gone in for hen. It is keeping hen in a derelict corner of the garden. Not only that: I am having to feed hen.

And that's the trouble. For if there's anything to set me against hen, it is having to feed it.

I will pass, retching slightly, over the subject of the actual food. The sweet simple corn, those little golden nuggets which used to shower down upon the poultry run, like Zeus keeping a date with Danae, is no more. Instead hens have to exist on elderly boiled potatoes mashed up with a frightful secret weapon called "balancer meal," which smells like dead crusader. (Maybe it is dead crusader.) Yet the morons actually seem to like it.

Which brings me to the real reason

why I object to feeding our hens. It is their almighty, terrifying, dyed-in-the-feather stupidity. It just makes me wild. (To be fair, they may think I'm equally stupid to *get* wild.) In fact after only a few months of feeding hens I've come to the definite conclusion that these birds are about the stupidest creatures ever created. Even the ant, which has a habit of walking up a six-inch blade of grass and down the other side instead of going an eighth of an inch round, would be considered bright beside the hen in spite of the difference in size of brain.

For what happens when I go to feed the hens? In the first place they cluster round the gate of the run so that I can't get in, and this in spite of the fact that the food is invariably tipped out in a trough at the other end. Any hen that had the sense to wait over there would not only be first at the eats but would have saved its breath by having the food brought to it instead of racing to the gate, and then racing back under my feet as I carry the food to the trough. It would also avoid being painfully trodden on en route, which happens every time to at least three of them.

Then again what happens when one of them gets a big lump, can't swallow it and so retires from the scramble round the trough to tackle it in peace in a corner? All the food is exactly the same—that is, equally revolting—yet about half a dozen others stop eating what they've got and go after this one hen with the big mouthful. They don't get it, because she runs round and round with it; on the other hand, she can't eat it because they don't give her time. If she does put it down for a moment and one of the others manages to snatch it, the game of chase is merely resumed, but with a different "he." And this chase may go on for a quarter of an hour till one

of them manages to choke the lump painfully back, with the usual air of surprised incredulity at having done so; and they return to the trough, to find the remaining hens have cleared up the rest of the food while they've been disputing over one exactly similar mouthful of it.

Or sometimes, as you open the gate and go in, a hen gets out in the excitement. Can it find its way in, though the door out of which it has just come is wide open? No. It will race wildly round the outside of the run, passing the open door each time but flinging itself madly at the wire netting at every other unlikely place, and finally entangling and nearly strangling itself. You have to go out, unwind wire from the gasping, purple-faced idiot, give it first-aid and then lob it over the netting like a grenade.

Other nitwits, who are among the first to greet you at the gate with the bucket of food, follow you excitedly to the trough, snatch a mouthful or so while you are tilting it out in the trough, and then leave it in order to race excitedly after you as you take the empty bucket back. You slam the door in their faces, while they eye the bucket hungrily and are likely to cluster there for hours waiting for food.

Then there is the hen that likes to think itself shy. In point of fact, it's only suffering from arrested mental development—arrested, that is, before it started any development whatever and going along quietly with the cops to a life-sentence. This hen rushes up with the rest and rushes back with the rest, but the moment the food is tipped out it goes all coy. It eventually comes up to the trough, where all the others are scrabbling like mad, and then shies off with a scared and puzzled look. After which it hovers on the outskirts watching you hard and obviously wondering when you are going to dish out the food. When at last the others have cleared the platter and are moving off to digest, it comes cautiously up again and investigates the empty trough. It then stands there for a mournful half-hour ruminating on the reason why you haven't fed the hens that day and what all the fuss was about.

Well, I could go on for hours, but already I'm feeling better. And a thought has just occurred to me. Hens are still stupid enough to lay eggs and let other people take them. That is a point. Yes, they've definitely got something there, and I think after all you can count me in as an operational billow in the storm of protest.

A. A.



Wechdale

"Try singing like Sinatra—she may swoon."

Round the Town

IT is a curious thing that, although there is less to buy than before the war, there seems to be a great deal more shopping than there used to be. From early morning until dusk falls hundreds of Munton-on-Sea men are to be seen walking about with shopping receptacles and bashful expressions, while their wives stay at home listening to the wireless.

I cannot think why men should be bashful about an innocent and indeed praiseworthy occupation like shopping, but most of them try to conceal their errand by putting their little leather bags, folded, inside their pockets until their purchases make this stratagem no longer possible. The shyest men all have these little leather bags. There is no clearer guide to a man's character than his choice of a shopping receptacle. The shy man, as I have said, chooses a folding leather bag which can be concealed until the first purchases are actually effected. At the other end of the scale is the man who carries a large open basket, which he swings with a devil-may-care air and plumps down openly on the bar counter when he pauses, between the grocer's and the butcher's, to refresh himself.

Of course most of us leave our bags out of sight behind the curtain, though this is a habit not without danger. The other day, for instance, two men with exactly similar leather bags,

having made their purchases at the grocer's, accidentally exchanged bags after rather a long session at the bar, and as one had drawn rations for only himself and his wife, while the other had, in addition, been the ambassador for three aunts and a sister-in-law, a good deal of confusion followed. The wife of the man who had only expected rations for two was delighted to find such large packages of butter, margarine, lard and sugar, and determined to vote Socialist at the next election. The other wife, finding her rations for six shrunk so low, burst into tears and told her husband that if there was another woman in his life she supposed it was only human, but he might at least keep their rations separate.

Then there is the exhibitionist, who carries a string bag and always seems to have bananas trying to struggle out of captivity, although everybody knows that his youngest daughter is nineteen at least.

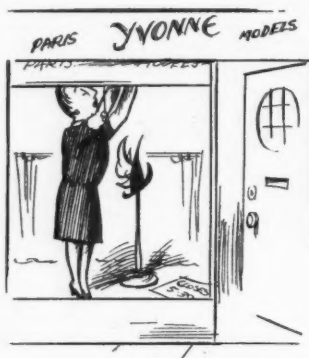
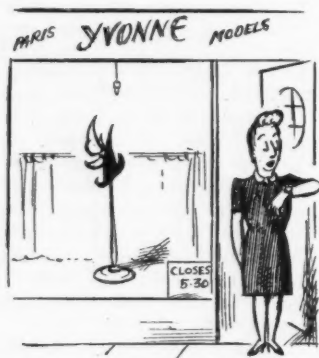
The forgetful man of course does not carry a basket, because he knows that if he remembers to take a basket he will forget to take the ration book, and whereas a ration book without a basket is inconvenient, a basket without a ration book is of no use at all. It is a pathetic sight to see the forgetful shopper walking home, dropping small parcels every few yards, and then stooping down to pick them up so that the potatoes can roll out of the too-

small bag provided under protest by the greengrocer and disappear into the gutter. But the forgetful shopper does not tread on the potatoes. He has only two feet, and one is needed to tread on the butter and the other on the lard.

There is also the brown-paper-bag shopper, who is generally of an optimistic disposition and surprised when the bag bursts; and the shift-eyed shopper with the very big black waterproof bag (almost a sack) into which it is impossible to see but which everybody guesses must contain goods either bought in the black market or obtained from under the counter from shopkeepers about whose past he knows something disadvantageous.

My friend Symphon hardly falls into any of these classes. He is in a class by himself, and goes shopping in an old shooting-coat with enormous pockets, ample for his bachelor purchases. When he gets an egg he always puts it right at the bottom.

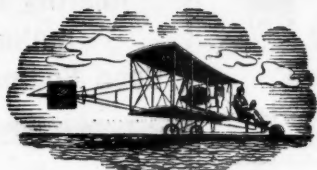
"I always break it before I get home, anyway," he explains, "and if it breaks in the bottom of the pocket I only have to scrape the egg off the pocket itself. If, however, I put it on top of the pocket with some absurd idea that it will not break at all, I have to scrape egg off the margarine, sugar, butter, lard, sardines and ration book, and it is wonderful what a lot of the egg one loses in such circumstances."



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The beginning of something else, too

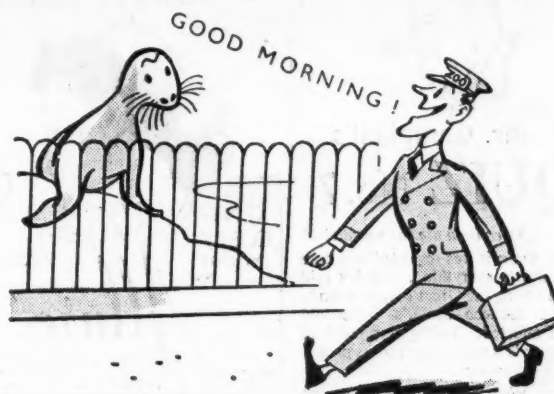
In 1909, Goodyear started developing pneumatic tyres to replace the sled runners the Brothers Wright fitted on their early aircraft. They were designed to meet the specific needs of the airplane and quickly dominated the field.

In 1928 Goodyear again revolutionised aircraft tyres by bringing out the air-wheel, which made landing at high speeds safe, and pioneered the way for new aircraft developments.

This pioneering is no accident; it is the result of a policy. Whenever transport presents a problem in tyres Goodyear find the answer. That is why they have always been in the forefront in manufacturing tyres not only for aircraft, but also for your car, your lorries, and the van that calls at your door.

GOODYEAR

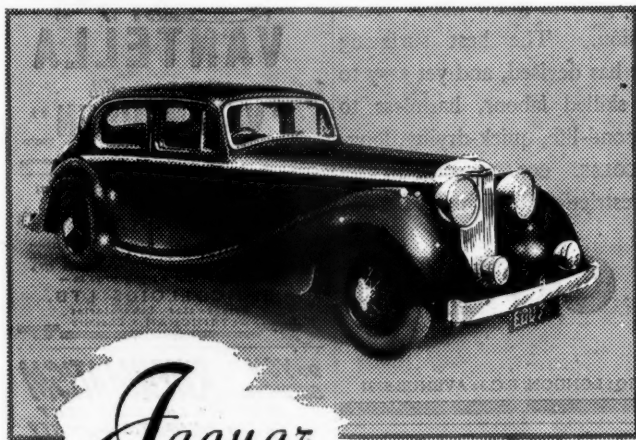
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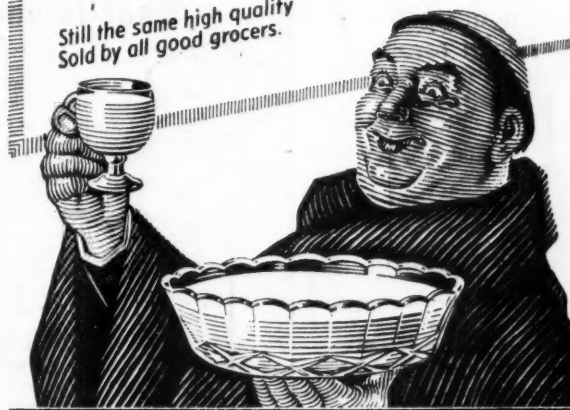
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- Q. Has tobacco been used as a medicine?
- A. Yes. Once it was regarded as a cure for nearly everything, and it's said that during the Great Plague nobody in a tobacco-dealer's household was affected. Today, a pipeful of Murray's is tobacco put to its proper use—smoking.
- Q. Were "clays" the first British pipes?
- A. No. Early British smokers used pipes made from half walnut shells, with straw stems, though some of the gentry affected pipes made of silver.
- Q. What is "Frenching"?
- A. A kind of blight that attacks tobacco plants grown on wet clay soil. But leaves from such plants never get into Murray's! Only unblemished leaves from healthy plants go to make this fragrant, stimulating smoke. One pipeful will convert you. Murray's Mellow Mixture burns evenly, smokes coolly—a really comforting tobacco. And it's only 2/8 an ounce.

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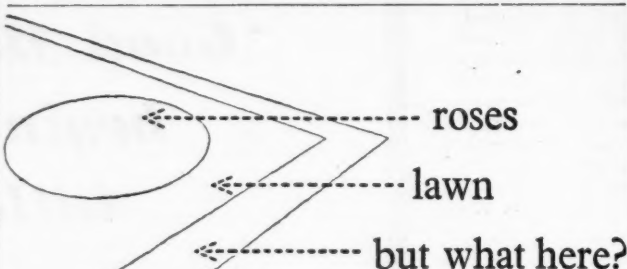
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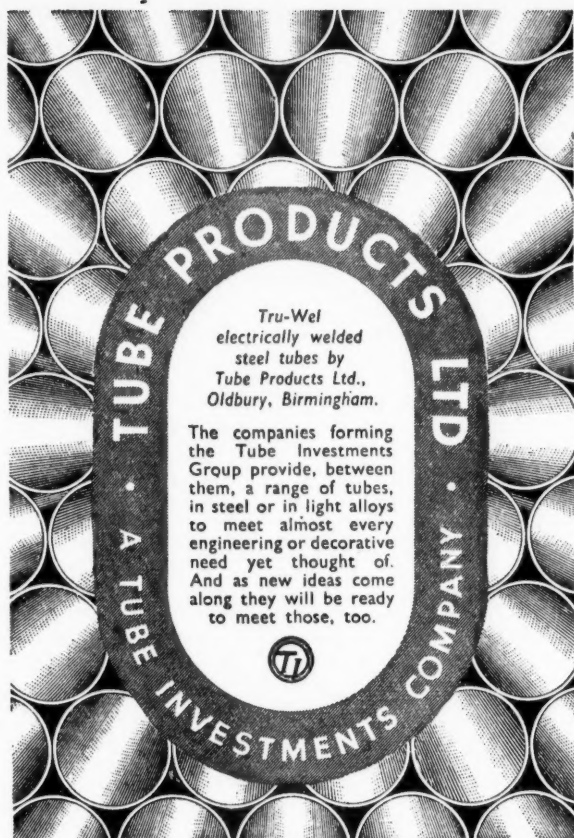
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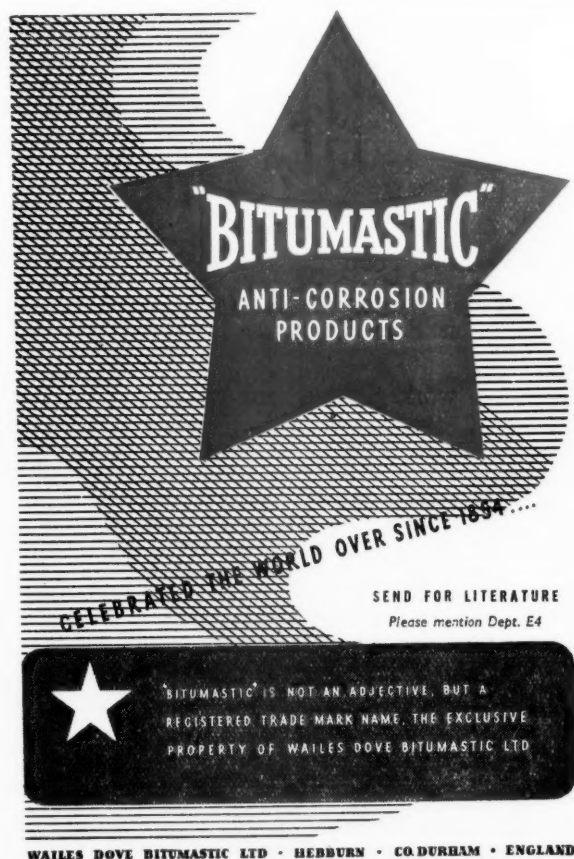
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